

California High-Speed Train: Merced to Fresno Section
Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental
Impact Statement
and
Draft Section 4(f) Statement

Pursuant to:

California Environmental Quality Act, P.R.C. 21000 et seq.; State of California CEQA Guidelines, California Administrative Code, 15000 et seq.; and National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332 et seq.) 40 C.F.R. Part 1500 and 64 Fed. Reg. 28545

Prepared by the

California High-Speed Rail Authority
and the
Federal Railroad Administration

With Cooperating Agency:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



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Date: 7/29/2011



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Abstract: This document considers, describes and summarizes the environmental impacts of the Merced to Fresno Section High-Speed Train (HST) Project, an approximately 80-mile portion of a larger HST system which is intended to connect to sections traveling west to San Francisco, south to Los Angeles and later, north to Sacramento. The project is designed as a steel-wheel-on-steel-railway completely grade separated from other modes. The need for this project is directly related to the population growth and increased intercity travel demand over the next 20 years and beyond and the increased travel delays and congestion that would result on California's highways and airports. Additionally, the Merced, Madera, and Fresno Counties have limited connectivity with the state's larger urban metropolitan areas. Four alternatives are considered in this Draft EIR/EIS, the No Project Alternative and the three HST alternatives: the UPRR/SR 99, BNSF, and the Hybrid alternatives. Each contains one station in Merced and one in Fresno. The HST in this section has the ability to travel up to 220 mph along the alignment. Potential environmental impacts of the alternatives include displacement of commercial, residential and agricultural properties; community and neighborhood disruption; increase in noise; increase in traffic at each of the stations; impacts on historic and archaeological sites; impacts on parks and recreational resources; visual impacts; impacts on sensitive biological resources and wetlands; and use of energy. Mitigation measures are described to address impacts identified in the Draft EIR/EIS.